PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

April 23, 2001
01-07

Web site: http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/pharme/index.html

PLEASE CIRCULATE AMONG DISPENSING STAFF

New PINs for methadone used in the treatment of pain

Please note that, concurrent with the new Methadone Maintenance Payment Program (described below), Pharmacare has issued new PINs for methadone used in the treatment of pain. As of **May 1, 2001**, the following PINs must be used when dispensing methadone for pain management:

PIN	Description	Maximum Price
66124065	Methadone Pain Suppositories	dependent on strength
66124066	Methadone Pain 1 mg/ml	$0.02/ml
66124067	Methadone Pain 2 mg/ml	$0.02/ml
66124068	Methadone Pain 5 mg/ml	$0.03/ml
66124069	Methadone Pain 10 mg/ml	$0.05/ml
66124070	Methadone Pain 20 mg/ml	$0.08/ml
66124071	Methadone Pain 25 mg/ml	$0.09/ml

New Methadone Maintenance Payment Program

Pharmacare recently announced that it had accepted the principles of a proposal put forward by the British Columbia Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) in regard to remuneration levels for dispensations under the Methadone Maintenance Program. The new Methadone Maintenance Payment Program follows consultations with the BCPhA, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia and participating pharmacies.

On March 28, 2001, a detailed information package was mailed to community pharmacies. If your pharmacy currently serves, or would like to serve, Methadone Maintenance Program clients and you have not received a copy of this information package, please contact the PharmaNet Help Desk.

For the benefit of all pharmacies, the attached information reiterates—and provides additional details regarding—the new payment program.

For further information, or to obtain Patient Information Sheets or copies of the Addendum to the Pharmacy Participation Agreement, please contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk.

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Please Circulate Among Dispensing Staff

Details of the New Methadone Maintenance Payment Program

Effective May 1, 2001, methadone under the *Methadone Maintenance Program* will be dispensed under the PINs described below:-

A. **Methadone dispensations involving direct interaction with the patient** must be dispensed under PIN 66999990.

Pharmacies who choose to participate in the new payment program will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02 ml
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid
- a $7.70 interaction fee will be paid for each dispensation of methadone under the *Methadone Maintenance Program*. The interaction fee is payable to **enrolled** pharmacies for all Pharmacare eligible claims, including those under the Universal Plan deductible.

  Interaction fees will be automatically calculated using PharmaNet medication history queries of methadone maintenance by PIN by pharmacy. Payments will be made monthly and noted on the Remittance Advice Form under a separate adjustment code.

In return for this compensation for the unique elements of methadone dispensing, participating pharmacies will undertake not to bill patients more than the amounts compensated by Pharmacare. Pharmacies must also agree not to offer cash or incentives *of any kind* to methadone clients. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing statement, incentives include, but are in no way limited to, air miles, loyalty points, bus passes, etc.

Pharmacies who elect not to participate in the new payment program will not receive an interaction fee but will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02 ml,and
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid.

B. (1) Methadone dispensations that do not involve direct patient interaction
(including methadone provided to incarcerated patients, patients in pre-trial facilities, Plan B patients or to physicians for administration to patients) must be dispensed under PIN 66999991. All dispensations under this PIN, except Plan B (see below), will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02 ml, and
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid.

(2) Methadone dispensations for Plan B patients must also be dispensed under PIN 66999991 and will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02 ml, and
- the usual Plan B capitation rates will be paid.

Dispensing fees

Dispensing fees in excess of the Pharmacare maximum fee should be handled in the usual manner.

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NHB) clients

Pharmacare covers methadone costs for some NHB eligible clients. If your pharmacy serves any of these clients, please contact the PharmaNet Help Desk. If appropriate, the Help Desk will *temporarily* change the patient status to allow the processing of a methadone prescription.

Strength

All prescriptions under the *Methadone Maintenance Program* must be 1 mg per ml, as required in the Health Canada *Drugs Directorate Guidelines*. If a physician prescribes a different strength, please advise them to contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons for clarification.

Multiple days' supply ("Carries")

"Carries" must be claimed as a multiple day supply for drug cost plus a single dispensing fee and single interaction fee (if applicable). Multiple dispensing fees and or interactions fees claimed for "carries" will be subject to recovery by Pharmacare. For example, when a pharmacist dispenses a 3-day prescription for methadone, and where there is face-to-face interaction with the patient in the form of witnessing ingestion or counselling, only one dispensing fee and one interaction fee will be permitted for the 3-day supply.

Process for participating

Participation in the interaction fee portion of this payment program is optional. We hope the new program will encourage pharmacies who dispense methadone to continue doing so, and encourage other pharmacies to consider providing this important service.

To participate in the program, pharmacies must sign an addendum to the *Pharmacy Participation Agreement* and return it to Pharmacare. On receipt of the signed addendum, Pharmacare will return a signed copy and register your pharmacy for the program.

Audit

The accuracy and validity of methadone claims will be verified on a monthly basis.

Cost impact on patients

There will be no cost impact for most patients. Plan E patients may experience a cost savings.

Plan A (Seniors): In consideration of the financial burden that additional dispensing fees would place on Seniors who are not currently paying dispensing fees and who have not yet met the annual Plan A deductible, Pharmacare will waive the dispensing fees for methadone maintenance dispensations for these clients. Pharmacies can process Plan A methadone maintenance transactions as normal; Pharmacare will automatically waive the dispensing fees for affected Seniors *for those transactions*.